

Genesis 21-22

National Day of prayer announcement!

Widows Ministry announcement...

So we remember last time God had to work through one more trial with Abraham.

I believe Abraham after this great failure in the land of the Philistines perhaps understood God will be faithful to him.

He is embarrassed one more time by lying to the King Abimelech that Sarah was his sister.

And Abimelech's Household gets a plague and God even closed up the wombs of the woman of his household.

Abimelech rebukes Sarah, and this family of great nobility is humbled once again.

So now it seems God has taught Abraham all he needs to know, and He fulfills His promise to him and Sarah.

Isaac Is Born(Heb 11:11)

21:1 And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

We see the Lord is not slack concerning His promises to Abraham.

He is true to every Word.

The impossibility of Sarah having a child in her old age was no big thing for God.

Understand this, Our God is true to His Word.

At His right time He will act.

Now what are some promises we are waiting to be fulfilled right now, at this point in history?

The Rapture right?

You understand that throughout church history there were great moves of God focusing on the return of Christ?

Then of course the 60's came and went, then the 70's, then he would surely come in the 80's, nope, the 90's, no, here we are 2016, and will He come?

You see many of the Christians from the 60's and 70's burned out on their anticipation of Christ's return.

They were experiencing revival on the excitement of any moment.

And then time went on, and they began to doubt.

They were like the unprofitable servants Jesus spoke about...

Matt 24:48-51 But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And like Abraham when things didn't happen right away they began to doubt.

Abraham in his doubt slept with another woman, and had a son in sin.

And many Christians from these early days have left their first love; they have lost their zeal for God's Word and His promises.

And instead of the Lord building His house, with the Joy and the presence of His Holy Spirit, the church over time has become a program, a machine, to kind of keep things going.

But this is the thing, God is true to His promises, and He can come back at any moment, more now so than any other time in History.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

You see God has been patient, to bring in many more that would be saved into His Kingdom.

But the reason I see His return is anytime, is because now man, and culture has driven the concept of our Creator so far from our hearts.

Gatherings in His Name are no longer sacred, no longer do God's people come to hear God's Word, and they are motivated by humanism.

People don't want to hear from God's Word anymore.

And our culture is so closed off to a presentation of the gospel; it seems we are close to a time similar to the iniquity of the Amorites being fulfilled.

The iniquity and apostasy of the church is increasing, and God has been patient, and I believe we are in the last moments of this time of longsuffering.

Christ's return will be soon, and we need to be ready.

I pray we learn this soon, learn from our mistakes as Abraham did, and begin to look up, for our redemption draws nigh!

God was faithful to His Word to Abraham, Sarah was miraculously given a child.

God's Word came about, logic, science, anything of human possibilities and explanation had to be put aside here.

It was impossible at this moment in Sarah's life to have a child, and God is glorified in this impossibility.

So we see the obedience of Abraham next...

3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him — whom Sarah bore to him — Isaac.

As God commanded him to do in Genesis 17:19.

Isaac means "He Laughs" or "laughter"

And Abraham continues in his obedience in vs. 4...

4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." 7 She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."

Sarah kind of rejoicing at recalling the promises and faithfulness of God.

And recalling her moment of doubting God, and now her laughter will be of rejoicing with others.

For this story can now only bring Glory to God, and nothing of man's efforts.

Hagar and Ishmael Depart(Gal 4:21-30)

8 So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Usually in this culture a child was weaned from his mother between 2 to as far as five years old.

Some speculate Isaac was 3 here when he was weaned.

And there was a great feast, a celebration for this rite of passage.

It is interesting to me that Abraham has had another son for 15 or so years up to this point, who Abraham loved, and I am sure Hagar and Ishmael held a prominent position in the family, for up to this point Ishmael was the only heir to Abraham.

But we see a turn of events, the son of promise was here now, all the sudden this new baby was getting all kinds of attention.

There was no celebration mentioned when Ishmael was weaned.

And all the sudden maybe Hagar and Ishmael have lost the status they once had.

And we will see this ugly thing creep in now, called jealousy.

And we will see the fruit of this sin.

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. 10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." 11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.

12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. 13 Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."

So here we have a jealous Ishmael, who begins to mock Isaac.

And the consequences are severe.

Notice Ishmael is no longer mentioned with his name but is reduced to the son of a bond woman.

Even God refers to him this way.

The status and comfort they once had, has been taken from them in a moment's time, because of a jealous heart.

Now this jealous heart is a rotten dirty thing, its destruction is endless left unchecked.

There is no limit to what a heart blinded by jealousy can do?

You watch see the worship team singing worship week after week, and you think why am I not up there, why are they so special, their voices well they are not even that good?

And in your jealousy you begin to spread lies, and rumors, and your hand is like this----- when you talk about them.

You try destroying their reputation, you try to draw others against them, and you scoff as Ishmael did.

But learn a lesson here you who have a jealous heart, Ishmael was the one reduced, he was the one cast out for this satanic sin.

This was the very reason Satan was removed from his position.

If this is your heart, maybe you are jealous of a brother, sister, or someone you might call a friend, repent of this evil before it is too late.

You see pride will never get you in front of people to do God's Work.

There is another kingdom that welcomes you.

It is one full of slander, full of hate, full of backstabbing, this kingdom will welcome you in with open arms.

It will allow you to use and cheat people to get to the top, to get to where everyone is looking at you, you will find a spotlight at the expense of others.

But beware because this same kingdom will turn on you too.

You see it is no respecter of persons, it devours and destroys rich and poor, it can care less of your title or who your daddy is, and it will eventually turn on you too.

So my advice to you is to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, repent, and allow Him to lift you up.

He wants to use you whoever you are, but he cannot use that jealous heart.

So we see next Abraham will do the hard thing, and listen to his wife, as God commanded him.

14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her

shoulder, he gave it and the boy (Notice his name is not even recorded here) to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.

I cannot imagine the desperation here by this mother. She has known a life of nobility in Abraham's household.

Abraham loved the son she bore to him.

After all it was Sarah all along who staged this whole thing.

"I was a servant, I did as I was commanded, I slept with my master, I bore him a child, I did all I was supposed to do" Hagar may be thinking, "I am innocent"

"And here I am watching my son die, the son I received being obedient to my master, my master Loved his son, now this woman whom I despise has cast me out."

“Who will care for me now, I have only known my master’s generosity, and I have only known my master’s tent, my master’s provision”

“Who will care for me and my boy now, God are you there?”

Of course this may not have taken place, but whatever she was crying out, God heard her, and her lad may be crying out too...

As we see next...

17 And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20 So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21 He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Some things worth noting here, we see God wanting Hagar and Ishmael to be dependent on Him.

He would be there source of provision.

He opens her eyes and there is a well there and they drink and live.

Ishmael grew up in the wilderness and God indeed made him a nation.

But something that sticks out to me is this...

The first time Hagar encountered the LORD, He referred to himself as the Angel of the LORD, or Yahweh, which is a term of a personal God, a present God, one that is in a relationship with mankind.

But here now in our story, after she is out of the covering of Abraham's household, the word Elohim is used when referring to God speaking to her.

It seems the relationship changed.

Elohim is Creator God, Superior to everything.

Every man has dealings with Elohim, unbeliever and believer alike.

This is the characteristics of God that is referred to when Jesus is telling us to love our enemies and He says this...

Matt 5:44-45 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father

in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

You see wicked and good people all deal with Elohim, God the Creator.

But those of us who believe by faith that Yahweh sent His Son to Die on the cross for our sins, know Elohim, as this personal Savior, our personal, relational, God Yahweh.

Hagar no longer deals with God on this personal level, but deals with Him as Creator, and maybe that is why Ishmael and his descendants took in the pagan beliefs of the little “g” gods around them.

Islam is a product of this man’s relationship with God Almighty.

So if you don’t know God personally tonight, please change that, you don’t want to deal with Him as Elohim the Strong One know Him as your Savior, even your Abba Father.

He paid a huge price for this relationship, He is worthy of His reward.

A Covenant with Abimelech

22 And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. 23

Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt."

24 And Abraham said, "I will swear."

So a contract is made between this king and his commander with Abraham.

This is interesting; Abraham's witness to them, proved to them that God was with Him.

After Abraham's great blunder, and as time went on, his testimony grew, and was noticed.

And I have said in the weeks past, maybe you have marred your reputation, well you can make a decision to change that, and over time, your peers and family will too see God is with you.

I remember on the jobsite, after I was clean a few months, I messed up, and blew my witness, I tried to get loaded again with my co-workers, and it did not work though.

And even though I blew it, over time they saw I had changed, that God had changed me.

I had a testimony to the unbelievers around me.

And this too could be the case for you.

So you blew it already this year, well repent, and ask God to help you the rest of the year, and He can, and will send you the Helper, the Holy Spirit.

You can begin to bring Him glory as well.

It is interesting to me that one of the qualifications of an Elder of the Church is this in...

1 Tim. 3:7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

A good reputation for Christ is important, I pray you we take it serious...

So next this meeting allows Abraham to voice some of his own frustrations, and in doing so they are able to settle a dispute.

25 Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. 26 And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." 27 So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. 28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?"

30 And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." 31 Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

33 Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God. 34 And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

So the dispute is resolved because these men talked and made a covenant.

We see Abimelech didn't even know of this ordeal.

I imagine, by the way Abraham blurted it out, he had thought it was done deliberately.

And in his assumption finds that it was a misunderstanding and they make a covenant.

There are so many grudges and disputes that are in the church due to misunderstandings.

I think that is why Jesus gives us practical ways to deal with our brothers and sisters.

In Matt. 18:15-17 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

You realize when you simply do what Jesus asks here so many times in the first step healing comes.

And usually you find it was all a huge misunderstanding.

But what usually happens is we skip step one, and we begin our holy gossip, "I need to get spiritual council on this" we justify our gossip.

And we go to someone, "Oh I just need you to pray for me, and give advice on dealing with so-in-so."

"Oh" we begin, "it is so difficult, I said hello to her on Sunday and she just whizzed right passed me, oh, I have been noticing lately she is so withdrawn, so course, I don't even know how strong her marriage is."

And this destructive discourse begins, and rumors spread, and lives effected, all because you skipped step one.

Step one involves you going to that person, no pastor, no elder, no one in leadership, and confront them, and you know what you find most of the time?

Oh she was late picking up her kids from Children's Ministry, and she loves you, Oh it was just this huge misunderstanding, and God usually heals whatever is going on.

It usually never gets passed step one, once in my whole walk with the Lord have I seen it reach the last step.

So Abraham and Abimelech establish their covenant...

And now our Narrative continues on.....

Abraham's Faith Confirmed(Heb. 11:17-19)

22:1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

God tests Abraham, and He calls him out by name, and Abraham responds "Here am I"

What would be a purpose for God to test Abraham and is it even fair that God gets to do this?

Well in this test there are many foundational factors for our faith as Christians.

God used these tests to bring Glory to Himself and His plan for man's redemption...

What is the purpose for God to test us?

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

You see our faith is tested, to see it strengthened.

The trials are for our own good; ultimately they bring God Glory, as He produces in us patience.

Let us look at Abraham's test here...

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Now this is interesting!

This is the first place in the Bible we see the term love.

There is a principle when you study scripture called the "principle of first mentioned"

This principle states that the first time you come across a concept in scripture it can and usually does set the premise and the meaning throughout scripture.

So the first place we see love in scripture in a father to a son reference.

The fathers love for his son.

Now this is a heart wrenching love.

God is telling Abraham that this son from which you love, I want you to take him up on a mountain and sacrifice him to Me.

So we see the heartbreak associated with this kind of love.

It is an attached love, a sacrificial love; a godly father's love for his child is one of the most powerful forces on this planet.

There is nothing but death only; that would stop me from protecting, and providing, and cherishing my son and daughters.

I remember when Sof was just old enough to walk, she was just starting to realize how big her little world was, and she just started to understand fear.

And one night, she was in our living room as we were entertaining some guests.

Well we were having a worship night, and dinner with the youth.

And someone came barging through our door, it was a friend who was just playing a trick on us, and he pulled a party popper out, meanwhile little Sofia is just panicked in the middle of the living room, and Jess looked at our friend and said “don’t” because of the people in our house we could not get to our frightened child.

And I remember he looked right at Jess and pulled the popper, and Sof just panicked, I have never seen her so scared in her 4 years on this earth.

Well something awoke in me and it frightened me.

I realized in that moment the love I have for my little girl is very powerful, and if anyone hurt her, or put her in danger it would take an act of God to stop me.

And that night luckily for my friend God acted.

But this love of a father is powerful, and I understand the extremes that it can take someone.

So the principle of first mention, love like a father’s love for his child, is the principle of love throughout scripture.

You see a perfect definition of this type of love is in 1 Cor. 13.

1 Cor. 13:4-8 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails.

But the interesting thing is the first mention of love in the New Testament in 3 of the gospels is at Jesus' baptism, what happens?

God the Father speaks of love in this way...

Matt 3:17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

So we have a Father's love first mentioned in the New Testament in the first 3 gospels toward His Son.

Now the first mention in John is where it gets interesting? We see the purpose of this love...

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Now we are beginning to see where this principle leads us.

God shows us the depth of His Love for His Son, but this Love was sacrificed for His Love for you and me, for all who would believe in Him, for everlasting life.

Now if this principle be true, in this first story of a fathers love we should see pictures of God's Love, and his plan for redeeming man to Himself.

Let us read on...

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

Some interesting things taking place here.

We see Abraham's obedience; we see he even took the wood with him; so there would be no excuse when they arrived upon the mountain top.

He couldn't say, well darn it there is no wood.

This is probably really strange and super difficult for Abraham to understand, why God would want him to

sacrifice his son, the son God promised many nations from?

The pagans all around them sacrificed their children to their gods, why was Yahweh asking this of him.

But Abraham has learned to obey God at all costs; you see all those mistakes earlier prepared him for this moment.

“Now God has promised me nations will come from this lad, surely He will raise him from the dead.”

Who knows what Abraham was thinking, but we do know he obeyed.

And it says there in verse 5 that he told his servants that he and his boy were going to go worship, and that they indeed would be back.

This shows us that Abraham knew that his son would come back with him.

But this word worship, we use it all the time, what do you think it means?

“I don’t think that word means what you think it means”

It means to Bow Down, in reverence, to prostrate yourself, to live a lifestyle of obedience in humility.

When we sing, we are praising Him, but worship is done through all out obedience.

We do what is asked of us out of reverence to the Lord.

So worship would be an act of sacrifice, a deed of obedience.

He tells us to obey and honor our parents, when we do, at all costs; it is an act of worship.

When you are on the computer and you are all by yourself, you know you can get away with it.

But then you remember God is watching; so you choose to go for a walk instead of doing bad things, you just worshipped.

When you are given opportunity to share your faith in the workplace, and boldly share what God is doing in your life, that is worship.

When you know you should offer to pray for someone, and you step out and obey, you are worshipping.

We worship with our tithes, and giving.

We worship when we forgive as God instructs in His Word.

Bowing down and submitting to His will.

Shachah in reverence to Our Awesome God... It is a lifestyle, not the 30 minutes before the pastor preaches.

Worship is an existence of obedience and bowing down to Almighty God.

So Abraham continues on with his act of worship...

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

So you see Isaac is starting to catch on something is not right here.

Some say Isaac is 20-30 years old here.

He could easily take his father.

But he goes willingly; all the way to the point of... well let's see...

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham

stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

You see at this point Isaac is going willingly to his own death.

Remember I told you to look for a picture of God's redemption plan, in this first mention of love.

Do you see some resemblance to God sending His Only Son to the Cross, as Jesus too went willingly.

Do you understand all that Abraham went through, all the trials, the mistakes, everything culminated to this point, where he had to get it just right?

He had to lay his Isaac down.

He had to paint the picture for us, of the ultimate picture of love.

There is no room for either Abraham or Isaac to be disobedient no matter what the cost.

And we see they loved God so much they would have been obedient to Isaacs's death.

So let's pray and close for the night....

Oh sorry the most important part of the story is next....

11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

So he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

We see here this act was to be a picture of God laying down his own Son.

Abraham showed he feared God and was obedient even unto the death of his son.

Then God stops him, and provides the sacrifice needed.

A lamb, and again we have a complete picture.

God will provide the Lamb; He will provide a sacrifice once and for all for all of man's sins.

You see Abraham was just a picture of what God was going to do, and only God could do, these two men were sinners, Isaac could not be the sacrifice, and God would provide the sacrifice of His Own Beloved Son.

Now we have the complete picture, God in the ultimate act of Love sent His only begotten Son to die, for any, who would believe in Him, we will not perish, but we will have eternal life!

And listen to me now, if you have not done this, do it tonight. Tonight is the night of your salvation.

No one will love you as much as your Father in heaven, maybe you have a horrible earthly father.

Well God the Father will fill that empty space in your heart with His Love.

He proved it by sending His Beloved Son to die for you.

And all you have to do is receive this free gift by faith.

So don't leave here tonight without making the most important decision you could ever make....

Let's read on...

15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son — 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be

blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

And surely God has been true to this promise.

Every nation will be blessed through Abraham, and salvation is extended to all nations not just the Jews.

The Seed is not plural; there is one Seed that was promised to Abraham that would bless those who put their faith in Him.

This Jesus whom we worship is this promised Seed.

Believe!

The Family of Nahor

20 Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21 Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23 And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

Now Abraham did not find anyone suitable for this promised son Isaac amongst the people groups around

him, so as it seems he is still receiving word from home somehow, and he hears of a woman of his own people named Rebekah.

And love is in the air, for which we will read our first romance story next time... Yayayay!

So tonight, maybe God might be asking you to lay your Isaac down, maybe there is something in your life so precious, so prized, and God is saying trust me let it go.

Maybe the LORD has you in a time of testing, really just strengthening your faith.

Will you trust Him and move forward in faith with your life?

You see we are not saved by works or the ritual, but James our Lord's brother explains in

James 2:18-24 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham

believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Abrahams faith produced in him action, his faith was made evident in his obedience.

Now again God is speaking to some of you tonight, and he is asking "do you trust Me, will you obey Me, Worship Me, Bow down and submit?"

I will admonish you tonight to Obey that voice, like Eli spoke to Samuel in 1 Samuel 3, when we are told the Word of the Lord was rare in those days, but God spoke to young Samuel and Samuel replied **1 Sam 3:9** **'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.'**

If you are hearing the Lord tonight, obey him.

You see God is not silent, He is looking for those servants who have ears to hear, and obey.

In obedience is where you find Joy, Peace, where you find purpose, and nowhere in scripture do we see it will be easy.

In fact, I am willing to say, look at the roads before you, the options laid out in your life, and the hard road, more than likely is the right road of obedience.

If the Lord is speaking to you tonight, come and get prayer tonight, me and John will be available after service, get prayer for strength to obey His voice.